History, Weimar and Nazi Germany

Lesson 23

How far did the Nazi Party control the state through propaganda?

Miss Shanks

What is the difference between censorship and propaganda?

Censorship involves **banning** or **removing information** and ideas. This controls attitudes by forbidding certain information or opinions. Whereas **propaganda** doesn't ban opinions, it **creates them**. It controls attitudes by putting ideas into people's minds.

Who was Joseph Goebbels?

Goebbels was an educated man who graduated with a doctorate from University in 1920. He joined the Nazi Party in 1922 and it is believed that at first he did not particularly like **Hitler,** but then **Hitler** won him over at a conference in 1925. He then became a very close ally of **Hitler.** In 1930 **Goebbels** was made **Head of Propaganda** for the Nazi Party and he was responsible for campaigns used throughout the **1932 elections**. For example he was responsible for the '**Hitler** over Germany' campaign, using an aeroplane to fly **Hitler** from city to city to deliver speeches, this proved a highly effective strategy and was very revolutionary for the time. In 1932 he was made the **Minister of People's Enlightenment and Propaganda**. His job was to censor any attitudes which the Nazis opposed and promote the attitudes which the Nazis supported with propaganda.

How was the media used to control attitudes?

Media refers to methods of communication, this lesson focuses **newspapers** and **radio** in particular. Newspapers thrived under the Nazis, but they had to give the messages the Nazis wanted or they would have to face the consequences. Any newspapers or magazines which opposed the Nazi's views were closed down. **By 1935, the Nazis had closed down more than 1,600 newspapers! The Reich Press Law** was passed in October 1933 and it resulted in the **removal of Jewish and left-wing journalists**. **Daily briefings** were held for newspaper editors, the people responsible for putting the newspaper stories and ideas together. In these briefings they were told what to print and where to place articles in their newspapers. If an editor wasn't a **member of the Nazi Party** they either had to join or they'd lose their job.

Goebbels believed the **radio** as one of the most important methods of controlling people's attitudes and so all radio stations were placed under Nazi control. **Cheap radios** were made on a huge scale, called **People's Receivers,** and these could **only** be tuned to the Nazi station. By 1939, about **70% of German families owned one of these radios.** They were also installed in **cafes, factories, schools** and **offices**. Loudspeakers were also placed in the streets. It was important that the Nazi message was heard by as many people as possible, and as much as possible. Importantly, the radio would not transmit any other radio station, especially foreign radio stations. **Listening to foreign radio stations was banned!**

How were rallies used to control attitudes?

A **rally** is a really large gathering or meeting of people who share similar ideas or are there to show support for something or someone. The biggest annual (yearly) rally was held at **Nuremberg** to advertise the power of Nazi Germany. Other parades were also held on other special occasions, such as **Hitler's** birthday on the 20th April.

The **Nuremberg rally** would last a week and attracted almost **one million people** each year after the Nazis came to power. The rallies involved **music, speeches and military parades.** These rallies showed Germany to be strong and powerful which would either make Germans proud of their country or fill them with terror, depending on their viewpoint.

How did the Nazis use sport to control attitudes?

Sport stadiums were covered with **Nazi symbols** to make the connection between being enthusiastic and supporting your team with enthusiasm for the Nazis. Another way of promoting the Nazis through sport was by insisting that all sporting teams, including teams from abroad visiting Germany, had to do the **Nazi salute during the National anthem.** So now people were seeing well respected sportsmen showing their respect for the Nazis! One of the biggest opportunities for **Hitler** and the Nazi Party to use sport as a **propaganda** tool was with the **Olympic Games** of 1936. The **Olympic Games** of 1936 were to be held in **Berlin**, the capital of Germany. This gave **Hitler** the opportunity to present Nazi Germany in a positive light to the rest of the world.

The Nazis built the **largest stadium** in the world which held **110,000 people. 110,000 people** surrounded by **Nazi swastikas** and Nazi symbols! The 1936 **Olympic Games** were extremely well organised and were successful for the Nazis in terms of how they presented themselves to the world. Germany **won more medals than any other country** with 33 gold, 26 silver and 30 bronze medals being achieved. For the Nazis this showed their superiority and strength over other nations. Two films were released in 1938 based on footage of the 1936 Olympics as another form of **propaganda.** But it wasn't a complete success for **Hitler** as his attempts to show how superior and dominant the German athletes were compared to the other nations did not go entirely to plan. This was due, in particular, to the US olympic team and especially the actions of **Jesse Owens**.

Jesse Owens won **four gold medals,** broke or equalled **nine Olympic records** and set **three world records. Owens** won the 100 metres, 200 metres, long jump and 4 x 100 metres relay. There were nine other black US athletes in the track and field events, between them winning **seven gold medals. Hitler** was not happy with this at all and refused to present medals to the black athletes during the ceremony.

How did the Nazis use architecture to control attitudes?

Architecture refers to the design of buildings, in particular public buildings. Albert Speer was the most important Nazi architect of this period. Hitler disliked the modern style of architecture used within the Weimar Republic of the 1920s. Hitler wanted large stone buildings, like those seen in ancient Greece or Rome, buildings which would make Germany appear powerful. Speer designed many of the important buildings found in Nazi Germany, including the parade ground for the Nuremberg rallies. When designing buildings, Speer would construct huge buildings as the size would have given the impression of power. He also made sure that the buildings were decorated with massive Nazi flags and used domes, arches and pillars to make the buildings seem historic and grand.

How did the Nazis use music to control attitudes?

Hitler hated modern music, remember modern music for Hitler is music from the 1930s! Some types of music were censored whilst others were promoted. Jazz music was banned as it was seen as the creation of black musicians and therefore regarded as inferior by Hitler. The work of other musicians and composers were also banned, for example the work of Mendelssohn was banned because he was partly Jewish. Instead the Nazis promoted traditional German folk music and the classical music of Richard Wagner, Beethoven and Bach.

How did the Nazis use film to control attitudes?

Goebbels also saw the popularity of the **cinema,** with over 100 films made each year and having audiences of over **250 million people in 1933.** He was one of the first to realise its potential for **propaganda.** The Nazis made sure they controlled the views found within the films as a film plots were shown to **Goebbels** before going into production and being created. He also realised that many Germans were bored by films that were obviously too political. So, love stories and thrillers were given **positive Nazi messages throughout.** Films shown in cinemas started with a **45-minute official newsreel which publicised Nazi achievements.**

One Nazi film director who gained praise, not just within Germany but also internationally, was **Leni Riefenstahl.** She produced a documentary called **Triumph of the Will** about the Nazi Party Conference and **rally** of 1934 and also one about the 1936 **Olympic Games**. The Nazi Party also made its own films for release to the German people; in total they made approximately **1,300 films. Hitler** ordered **Goebbels** to make **anti-Semitic** films (prejudiced against Jewish people) but these were not always popular with audiences. However, they were made more frequently after 1940.

How did the Nazis use literature to control attitudes?

Literature was hugely censored under the Nazis. All books, plays and poems were carefully censored and controlled to put across the Nazi message. Millions of books were taken from universities and libraries and burned on huge public bonfires. Students in Berlin burned 20,000 books written by Jews, communists and anti-Nazi authors in May 1933. There were similar burnings in other cities across Germany that year. Many writers were persuaded, or forced, to write in a way which praised Hitler's achievements.

Method used	Censorship/ Propaganda	How was this used to control attitudes and opinions?
The media (Newspapers)		
The media (Radio)		
Rallies		
Sport		
Architecture		
Music		
Film		
Literature		

Glossary

Architecture - Refers to the design of buildings, in particular public buildings.

Censorship - Censorship involves **banning** or **removing information** or ideas. This controls attitudes by forbidding certain information or opinions.

Media - Refers to methods of communication, such as newspapers and radios.

Propaganda - This doesn't ban opinions, it **creates them**. It controls attitudes by putting ideas into people's minds.

Rally/Rallies - A really large gathering or meeting of people who share similar ideas or are there to show support for something or someone.